

opinion is erroneous. These fishes deposit their spawn at the surface of the water, where the ova float throughout the whole of their development. The same naturalist has just made very similar observations upon various other species of fishes. He has ascertained, for example, that the mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*) lays its eggs at some leagues from the shore and at the very surface of the waves, where a great quantity of these fishes may often be met with engaged in spawning. With the ova of the mackerel, M. Sars has found those of six other species of fishes, one of which is the gurnard (*Trigla gurnardus*). The ova of the mackerel, like those of the cod, present at their superior pole a drop of oil, which diminishes their specific gravity so as to enable them to float at the surface. This drop remains during the whole period of evolution; and even after exclusion it is to be seen in the vitelline sac of the young fish. The young mackerel are recognizable by a sulphur-yellow spot placed behind the eye, which is still almost destitute of pigment.—*Nyt Magazin for Naturvid.* 1866; *Bibl. Univ. Bull. Sci.* 1868, p. 255.

*On the Name Alcyoncellum.* By Dr. J. E. GRAY, F.R.S. &c.

Dr. Bowerbank, in a late paper in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society,' 1868, p. 132, objects to my using *Alcyoncellum* for a calcareous sponge. He observes, "From this quotation we should naturally imagine that all preceding writers who have referred to this genus, as founded by MM. Quoy and Gaimard, were wrong, and that it was originally established by M. Blainville in his 'Man. d'Actin.,' published in 1834, instead of by MM. Quoy and Gaimard in their 'Zoology of the Voyage of the Astrolabe,' published in 1830." I need not quote the observations founded on this statement. The law of priority, even, is liable to mislead unless writers who use it are well acquainted with the history of the subject, and the books written on it. The 'Manuel d'Actinologie' is a reprint of the article "Zoophyte," published in the 'Dictionnaire des Sciences Naturelles,' vol. lx., and bears date 1830. And MM. Quoy and Gaimard published four volumes of the text to the 'Voyage of the Astrolabe:' the first volume bears the date 1830, as quoted by Dr. Bowerbank; but the fourth volume, which contains the account of *Alcyoncellum*, bears the date 1834. So I use the name according to the "excellent and just rules" to which Dr. Bowerbank refers.

I admit that there is a great difficulty on the subject. M. de Blainville described and figured a calcareous sponge brought home by MM. Quoy and Gaimard under the name *Alcyoncellum gelatinosum*; it is a very curious Australian sponge, like many fossil species found in the Eifel. MM. Quoy and Gaimard do not figure this sponge in their 'Voyage,' but they figure a species of Venus's Flower-basket (*Euplectella*), which is in the museum at Paris (a siliceous sponge not bearing the slightest resemblance to the calcareous one), and call it *Alcyoncellum speciosum*. In the text they quote the generic character for *Alcyoncellum* from the article "Zoophyte" in the Dict. Sci. Nat., and then describe under the specific name the siliceous sponge

that does not agree in the slightest degree with the generic character, which is that of a cylindrical branched sponge. I can only suppose that they had intended to figure the calcareous one and forgot it, and then somehow mixed up the two sponges together; at any rate, there is no doubt that by the law of priority the name of *Alcyoncellum* belongs to the calcareous Australian sponge, as, I think, Dr. Bowerbank must admit.

To add to the confusion, M. Milne-Edwards, in the second edition of Lamarck's work, published in 1834, seeing that the figures and the generic characters in MM. Quoy and Gaimard's work did not agree, instead of giving a new generic name to the sponge figured, gave a new character to the genus *Alcyoncellum*, evidently taken from MM. Quoy and Gaimard's plate. Thus he lost the credit of establishing the genus that was afterwards named *Euplectella*, though in fact he did establish it under a name used for a different sponge.

*On an accidental case of Monœciousness in Cœlebogyne.*

By H. BAILLON.

The author showed to the French Academy some monœcious branches of *Cœlebogyne ilicifolia*, Sm., bearing at the same time female flowers, ripe and entire fruits, fruits open to give issue to perfectly formed seeds, and, at their upper part, thousands of male flowers with the anthers full of pollen. The specimens formed part of a collection of Euphorbiaceæ sent from Australia for determination by Dr. F. Müller, and were collected at Rockhampton in the wild state.

The author remarks that the slight value of the genus *Cœlebogyne*, and the frequency of such anomalies in other genera to which its species might be referred (*Cladodes*, *Alehornea*, *Aparisthium*), had led him to predict that, sooner or later, cases of hermaphroditism or monœciousness would be detected in this plant. This prediction was already fulfilled as to hermaphrodite flowers. The present demonstration of the existence of accidentally monœcious flowers gives, in his opinion, the last blow to the doctrine of parthenogenesis.—*Comptes Rendus*, May 4, 1868, p. 856.

*Note on a Double Egg of a Fowl.*

*To the Editors of the Annals and Magazine of Natural History.*

GENTLEMEN,—A friend, residing in the Cuddupah district, in the Madras Presidency, has sent me a boiled fowl's egg which contains a smaller egg with a shell. It had been cooked for his breakfast.

Eggs with a double yelk I have several times seen; but I have never seen or heard before of a perfect egg inside another: it therefore appears desirable that it should be recorded in the 'Annals.'

I am, Gentlemen,

Very truly yours,

J. MITCHELL, Captain.

Ootacamund, Sept. 1, 1868.

Sup. of the Madras Museum.